

Whitchurch within reach of Quatt, after a nail biting win..

By Jamie Dowley

One of the games of the season took place at **Shelton** where two form teams met but it was **Whitchurch** who came away with a dramatic win. Both teams would lay claim to the best new ball attacks in the division but it was Dan Bowen and Alex Heath who struck first to reduce the hosts to 22-4. Ben Matthews was then joined by Harry Webster and they produced an outstanding 101 run partnership. Matthews was the dominant player making 63, but Webster will be happy with his highest first team score of 36. Added to a cameo 23 from Jack Morris meant the hosts were delighted to reach 184, with Heath (3-22) the pick of the visiting attack while there were 2 wickets apiece for Bowen, Shafique Ahmed and Muhammed Fahim. With weather closing in, Maz Hasnain decided to cut loose and that ensured Whitchurch were ahead on DLS, but when he departed for 48 from 37 balls to debutant Antonio Morris they went from 113-2 to 126-6 and Shelton were now in the box seat. Simon Jones and Sam Griffiths both got duly stuck in with 3 wickets each as the away side crept to a DLS target of 163, thanks in large to Ahmed (22no) who once again proved his worth with the bat for the second week running. It went down to the wire but when the players came off it was Whitchurch who were 4 runs ahead on DLS. A delighted Whitchurch chairman Iain Marsh paid tribute to both sides. *"they are a very good team and this is a tough place to come with the big crowd behind them. But we are delighted with our current form, the togetherness from the lads, spirit and will to win means we keep getting over the line in these tight games. The knives have been out again this week for us from the usual sources, it's disappointing but we will keep focusing on the next game and try and keep in touch with Quatt"*

A team who badly needed a win were **Sentinel** and they duly achieved it against a **Madeley** side who themselves are starting to look over their shoulders. A patient 31 from Tom Griffiths added to a half century from Rico Fourie and 38 from Jacob Binnersley set the game up for the hosts, while 23 at the death from Oliver Wilson eked the total up to 221ao. Captain Martin Boyle led from the front for Madeley with 3-36, but he would have been disappointed with the batting reply as Wilson, having a fine first season at this level, struck three times to leave them 44-4. The lower order did at least make the innings respectable, Nadeem Ahmed top scoring with 39 but the hosts were able to dodge the rain enough to finish off the Madeley innings at 149ao.

Wem are clear in third place after a convincing win against **Frankton**. Batting first at Soulton Road the hosts had contributions from most of their batsmen, with Martyn Davies who gave up his 2nd team duties for a week to top score with 49, while Sam Peate and captain Chris Peel assisted with 34 and 33 respectively. Frankton stuck at their task with the ball with Will Evans (2-43) and Stuart Lammie (3-42) keeping things respectable. It was a struggle for the visitors with the bat however once in form Jim Astley (3-16) had knocked over the top order, and younger brother Harry had taken three of his own to leave Frankton on 78-7 when rain washed out the rest of the game to give Wem a big win on DLS.

Rain ruined an intriguing game at Morda Rd, in a result that ultimately did neither team any favours, as **Oswestry** were stopped in their tracks at 63-1 in the 11th over in response to **St Georges** 184-7. Fifty from Muhammed Zaheer and 45 from pro Faizan Khan got a score on the board, and a quick late hit from Ben Byram of 20no was useful for the Dragons. However

Oswestry would probably have fancied chasing it down with Matty Richards and Ruchira Bandarage both in and going well before the washout. 7pts each was the outcome.

An identical points haul was also the result of a **Quatt v Ludlow** abandonment that again left both teams frustrated, although perhaps Ludlow were slightly ahead of the game. Jason Oakes who has turned around his batting season completely in recent weeks again top scored with 77, while there were solid half centuries for Luke Miles (54) and Deon Patel (59), as the Burway men totalled a fine 246-8 off 50. That fella, Kuldeep Diwan once again the leading bowler for Quatt with 4-37, while there were a brace of wickets apiece for Scott Furber and Alex Biddle. The hosts had reached 45-2 with Danny Bradley picking up both openers when the heavens opened and no further play was possible.

Shrewsbury 2nds picked up a good win at home to **Allscott** in a result that dragged them off the bottom after just one week. All their bowlers performed well in restricting the away side to 152ao, a total that was achieved thanks to contributions from Kuldeep Devatwal (50), Mo Adall (32) and Max Ferrington (28). A slightly reduced target off 137 off 41 overs was comfortably reached in the main thanks to a brutal 54 from Ed Pridaux off just 35 balls and 24 apiece from big guns Zane Beattie and Rob Foster. For Allscott Josh Allen with 2-28 and Devatwal (2-18) were the chief protagonists. A much needed win for the county towners.

Its hotting up in Division One also as now only 2 points separate the top 3 in a title race that looks to be going all the way. **Newtown** were the team to be cursing the weather as a certain victory against Shifnal was snatched from their grasp, while conversely **Cound** (pictured) possibly benefitted from DLS in their close win against **Ellesmere**.



Bomere Heath got back to winning ways in a dominant win against 4th place **Newport** who were blown away for just 67.

Next week in the Premier, can Whitchurch keep the pressure on Quatt as they travel to Park Street Madeley, while game of the day could be at the Burway as Ludlow host Shelton.

